



Kingston Conservation Advisory Council

[www.kingston-ny.gov/KingstonCAC](http://www.kingston-ny.gov/KingstonCAC)

## 2024 Annual Report

### General Background

This volunteer board is an advisory body that works to ensure the conservation of Kingston's natural resources and the enhancement and protection of its environment while fostering unified action on environmental matters. The City of Kingston is one of 16 other Ulster County Conservation Councils. The Kingston CAC was created under Resolution 180 of 2008.

This advisory board, consisting of Kingston residents, advises the Planning Board, Common Council, and Mayor on matters pertaining to the natural environment of the city; conducts public programs to inform the public of local and regional environmental issues; and coordinates with local groups which have an impact on the local environment.

The Kingston Conservation Advisory Council meets the second Tuesday of each month at 6:00pm[1] in Kingston City Hall Conference Room 1. The meetings are open to the general public. Since its inception, the CAC has held 178 general council meetings and 14 special meetings, in addition to sub-committee meetings. All meeting minutes and agendas are posted and archived on the Kingston CAC webpage [www.kingston-ny.gov/kingstoncac](http://www.kingston-ny.gov/kingstoncac) .

### 2024 Council Members (two-year terms)

Jennifer Adams	11/13/24-11/13/26	1 <sup>st</sup> term
Helen Atkinson	10/19/21-12/31/25	2 <sup>nd</sup> term
Anita Collins	10/19/21-4/24/23	1 <sup>st</sup> term *ended term early
Malia DuMont	1/23/24-12/31/25	1 <sup>st</sup> term
Briana Gary	10/1/22-10/31/24	1 <sup>st</sup> term
Emilie Hauser, Chair	1/1/13-12/31/24	6th term
Kevin McEvoy, Secretary	8/21/13-12/31/24	6th term
Lynn Woods	4/4/24-4/4/26	1 <sup>st</sup> term

# 2024 Highlights

## *Land Use*

Since May 2011, a CAC sub-committee has been in the process of working with the City in developing a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI) and subsequently an Open Space Plan for the City of Kingston. An NRI is a survey of the natural resources in a community, with the goal of informing the planning board, Common Council, and decision makers on land use decisions. In 2020, the City of Kingston completed, and the Common Council adopted, as an addendum to the City's Comprehensive Plan, an Open Space Plan for the City of Kingston. The final plan, vision, and all maps can be found at [www.kingston-ny.gov/nri](http://www.kingston-ny.gov/nri).

Through 2024, the CAC:

- a) Actively participated in and supported the City's work on advancing the Community Preservation Plan, along with the Kingston Land Trust.
- b) Supported the City's first large land acquisition: the 70 acre Kingston Wilderness
- c) Conducted research into Pollinator Pathways

## *Wood Burning/Air Quality*

In 2016, the Kingston CAC began a focused look into air quality concerns, particularly with a focus on localized residential wood burning in Kingston. This Kingston Air Quality Initiative (KAQI) advanced through 2023, in collaboration with the Center for the Study of Land, Air and Water at Bard College. This collaboration continued the work of monitoring Kingston air quality by collecting data from sources, both indoor and outdoor, around the city, focusing on fine particulate matter. In 2022, a web portal with live data from the Air Quality Monitor atop the Andy Murphy Midtown Neighborhood Center was launched to share the data with the community. Additionally, in 2022, the CAC supported the City of Kingston's anti-idling legislation which goes beyond the State legislation and establishes a time limit on idling for all vehicles citywide; this legislation became effective January 1, 2022. Additional work of a subcommittee began in 2023 which included advocacy for local air quality improvements, through a direct action: research of the impacts of and development of policy around gas-powered leaf blowers in Kingston.

Through 2024, this work continued as a full council effort, with:

- a) Additional research;
- b) Communications to the City of Kingston Department of Public Works and Parks and Recreation Department to urge the departments to phase out all gas-powered lawn and leaf-blowing equipment in favor of equipment powered by electric batteries. This effort resulted in both departments advancing a transition to electric equipment.;
- c) Communications to the Kingston City School District to educate the school principals, PTOs and PTAs about the impacts of vehicle idling, about the City's Anti-Idling Law and to encourage them to share this with their school communities.;

- d) Education of the CAC members to understand the impacts of airborne PCBs on our local community;
- e) Development of educational literature about idling and leaf blowers to distribute in the community.

### ***Kingston Forward- City wide Rezoning***

Since it's inception, representatives from the CAC have participated directly in the advancement of the Kingston Forward-Citywide Rezoning initiative. This work, which spanned the course of 2021 and continued into 2024, included working directly with consultants Dover, Kohl & Partners to provide NRI, sea level rise, open space and historic data and advising on environmental priorities as related to zoning and open space. CAC members sent collective comments on draft and final versions of the plans and were in regular contact with the consultants and project manager on the advancement as well as the implementation. The code was adopted on August 2, 2023.

Through 2024, the CAC continued to follow the zoning process and updates, with actions including:

- a) Communication to the Kingston Zoning Working Group regarding how renewable energy is currently addressed in the Form Based Code and recommendations for updated language.;
- b) Communication to the Planning Board and Department regarding the adherence to specified landscaping, vegetation and stormwater drainage as pertains to development.;
- c) Following the development of the City's Municipal Renewable Energy Implementation Plan, which also addresses zoning for renewables.

### ***Street Tree and Canopy Cover***

In 2020, a CAC street tree and canopy cover initiative began to address, among other things, city operations regarding street trees, communications with the community regarding trees, and understanding and communicating the value of trees. A liaison was established between the CAC and the Kingston Tree Commission to enhance communication about the city's tree canopy.

In 2024, the CAC:

- a) Continued to serve as a committed liaison to the Tree Commission, attending monthly meetings and collaborating on advancing the work of the Tree Commission and City. The CAC directly supported the initiatives of the Tree Commission and welcomed the addition of the City's Urban Forester.

### ***Tidal Waterfront Flooding Task Force***

The Kingston Waterfront Flooding Task Force was appointed by Mayor Shayne Gallo in the fall of 2012 and was charged with evaluating the present and future vulnerability to flooding, storm surge

and sea-level rise along the Rondout-Hudson waterfront. This group was asked to recommend strategies for a resilient waterfront and convened from December 2012 through August 2013. The group produced a final report [Planning for Rising Waters: Final Report of the City of Kingston Tidal Waterfront Flooding Taskforce](#) but the Task Force culminated with the production of the report. The Kingston CAC has continued to play a role in continuing the efforts of this Task Force.

In 2024, CAC members:

- a) participated in Flood Resiliency Network meetings and workshops as collaborators and for professional development opportunities pertaining to the waterfront.
- b) Conducted research into wetland preservation legislation and local impacts

## **Planning Board and Department Review**

Kingston CAC members regularly attend the Kingston Planning Board monthly meetings to stay abreast of local proposals and items of interest in Kingston. Additionally, beginning in the fall of 2012, the Kingston CAC began the informal process of general reviews of proposed developments that came before the Kingston Planning Board. This process includes a general review of each new proposal or action that comes before the Planning Board, for environmental impact. The scope of review has included concerns such as storm water runoff, habitat conservation, open space preservation, walkability and bikeability, and in-fill development. Concerns and recommendations are submitted to the Planning Department, for review by the Planning Board, in advance of the Planning Board meeting and CAC members are available for further comments or questions from Planning Dept.

In 2024, several specific site proposals were reviewed by the CAC:

- a) 235 Wall Street
- b) 140-159 Boulevard and 66-92 Pettit Avenue
- c) Kingston Wilderness land purchase

## **Letters of Support for Municipal Initiatives**

The Kingston CAC values the work of the municipal staff regarding relevant environmental issues and often provides letters of support to municipal applications for funding directed toward environmental initiatives. Though the CAC regularly submits letters of support, in 2024, the following letters of support were submitted to the City by the CAC:

- a) NYS Department of State Local Waterfront Revitalization Program for LWRP and Comprehensive Plan Update
- b) Green Resiliency Grant (GRG) for Safe and Accessible Flatbush and Foxhall Project
- c) NYS Department of Environmental Conservation Climate Smart Communities Grant for City Sidewalk Improvement Plan

- d) Dormitory Authority of the State of NY SWIMS Grant for Kingston Swimming Facilities Upgrades
- e) NYS Empire State Development Strategic Planning and Feasibility Studies Program for the Citywide Parking Study
- f) NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation for Kingston Land Trust Land in Black Hands Farm at Mason Hill

## **City Plan Review/Support**

A new initiative, starting in 2021 for the CAC, was to take a more proactive approach to reviewing and advising on City plans and projects within the scope of the CAC. Actions included reviewing designs, plans, and proposals and/or provide support to City projects. In 2024, the CAC helped the City advance projects including:

- a) Community Preservation Plan
- b) Kingston Point Park Improvements Phase 2
- c) Kingston Organics Phase 1 and 2
- d) Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE)
- e) Architectural and Design Services for Kingston Business Park
- f) Midtown Thriving: Brownfield Opportunity Area Grant

## **Environmental Reviews**

Frequently, the Kingston CAC will receive formal requests from either a community member, City staff, the legislative body or the executive body to review, research or weigh in on local environmental issues. The CAC then independently decides what action to take on each proposal. In 2024, the Kingston CAC participated in the following reviews:

- a) NY NJ Harbor and Tributaries Focus Area Feasibility Study review
- b) Pace University Resiliency Assessment
- c) Scenic Hudson's Solar Zoning Mapping Tool review
- d) Gas Powered Leaf Blowers/Noise Ordinance
- e) Native Plantings/Pollinator Gardens
- f) Legislation about Helium Balloon release- including writing a letter of support of state legislation to the NYS Senate and Assembly

- g) Wetland Preservation and Protection
- h) Hudson River Barge Anchorages
- i) Hudson River PCB Superfund Site 5 Year Review
- j) Lower Esopus Watershed Management Plan- including advancing legislation to the Common Council for adoption and submitting comments to Ulster County on the plan
- k) PCBs in Lower Hudson River
- l) Flushable Wipes outreach and legislation
- m) Spotted Lantern Fly infestation
- n) Route 28 Asphalt Materials Supplies Application for NYS Air State Facility Permit
- o) Ulster County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan
- p) Packaging Reduction and Recycling Infrastructure Act

## **Outreach/Engagement**

It is very important to the Kingston CAC to maintain a transparent and open relationship with the citizens of Kingston regarding environmental happenings in Kingston. All meeting minutes and agendas are posted in a timely manner on the City of Kingston website's CAC page, as are pertinent documents that the CAC has adopted, resource links and tools used for projects and initiatives.

Additionally, a member of the Kingston CAC attends each Public Safety/General Government Committee meeting of the Common Council to keep the city government abreast of Kingston CAC initiatives as well as to maintain an open line of communication with decision makers. Further, all CAC communications are shared with the Common Council CAC Liaison, which, in 2024 was Alderperson Michael Tierney.

CAC members actively participated in the 2024 Kingston Earth Fair.

## **Special Guests/Presentations**

The Kingston CAC often hosts organizations or individuals to monthly meetings for relevant topic-based presentations. These may either be pertinent to CAC initiatives or are informational.

In 2024, the Kingston CAC hosted the following special presentations or guests:

- a) Eli Dueker, Bard College, Airborne PCBs and Movement of Water Pollutants to Air

## Professional Development

Kingston CAC members regularly attend meetings, workshops and conferences to further professional development and to keep up to date on currently, relevant environmental issues regionally and locally.

In 2024, CAC council members participated in the following Conferences and Workshops:

- a) NYSACC Conference on the Environment (2024- Tug Hill, Sept 18-20)
- b) Ulster County Environmental Management Council Annual Roundtable
- c) Flood Resilience Network Lunch and Learn Quarterly Meetings
- d) Statewide Natural and Nature-Based Features Symposium that April 30th from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm.
- e) Hudsonia and Hudson River Estuary Program Small Streams and Wetlands field workshop May 30, 2024.
- f) Hudson Valley Circular Economy Summit September 12, 2024.
- g) Hudson River Environmental Society State of Hudson River Ecosystem Monitoring October 8, 2024
- h) Land Trust Alliance Webinar: Effective Communication with Landowners and Neighbors
- i) Land Trust Alliance Webinar: Remote Monitoring
- j) Urban Forestry Today Webinar: Understanding and Optimizing Runoff Reduction with Urban Trees
- k) NYNJHATS Army Corps Storm Surge Barriers meetings and updates
- l) Land Trust Alliance Meetings
- m) Hudson River Watershed Alliance Conference -October
- n) NY Planning Federation: Regulating Controversial Uses Planning Webinar 10-22
- o) Dutchess County Planning Federation: Lunch & Learn Webinar- Design Guidance For Better Buildings. 10-23

## Organizational Liaisons/Appointees

Kingston CAC council members hold positions on local environmentally related boards, and regularly acted as liaisons to:

- a) Ulster County Environmental Management Council
- b) Kingston Land Trust (Greenline, Land Use, Executive & Governance committees, Operations, Finance, Accreditation)
- c) Climate Smart Kingston Commission
- d) NYS Association of Conservation Commissions
- e) Public Safety/General Government Committee liaison
- f) Kingston Planning Board liaison
- g) Friends of Historic Kingston
- h) Kingston Forward: Rezoning Committee
- i) Kingston Tree Commission
- j) Hudson Valley Affordable Housing and Land Conservation
- k) Hudson River Environmental Society
- l) Complete Streets Advisory Council
- m) Kingston Preservation, Inc.
- n) Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission
- o) Hudson Valley Flood Resilience Network
- p) Hudson Valley Climate Action Network
- q) Kingston Point Park Phase 2 Project Advisory Committee
- r) Ulster County Water Quality Coordinating Committee
- s) League of Women Voters of the Mid-Hudson Region
- t) Saw Kill Watershed Community Group Leadership Team
- u) Hyde Park Trails Committee
- v) Winnakee Land Trust

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[1] Annually the CAC will set the time and day of month during the January meeting for the next 12 months.